

it and having nothing to do, I made for the top of the hill and on reaching it found myself on rather an extensive plateau, which bore signs of not very recent cultivation, but with the exception of a few straggling bushes, and many stones, was now as bare as a street of any verdure.

Here, to my surprise, I saw crowds of Harriers sitting on stones and on the ground and more were coming from every direction.

It was already late in the afternoon so I got behind a convenient bush and decided to wait and see whether they meant to stop the night there. Before sitting down, however, I strolled through a part of the ground, flushing several of the birds, which did not go far, to see if I could see any signs which would point to this being a regular roosting place of these birds, but to my surprise found none, or at any rate not sufficient to lead me to believe they had been there in any numbers before. I returned to my bush and hid myself as best I could, though concealment was not very necessary, as the birds would allow me to within 30 or 40 yards without rising. I had fortunately brought a pair of powerful Zeiss binoculars with me, so could take careful stock of all the ground before me. I was easily able to identify 3 different species among them and of some I was doubtful, but they may have been youngsters in a transition stage of plumage, so not easy to identify at any distance.

*Circus aeruginosus* (the Marsh Harrier) perhaps was the most numerous, then came *C. macrurus* (the Pale Harrier) and *C. melanoleucus* (the Pied Harrier) last. I only noticed 2 males of the latter species.

Next morning I had to pass the hill and was in time to see them making a move. It was evidently not migration they were after (it was rather too early in the year for that in any case), as they scattered in all directions.

Can any one tell me if it is customary for Harriers to roost in flocks like this on the ground?

I have neither read nor heard of them doing so and certainly never seen them do so before.

C. H. DONALD.

BHADARWA, KASHMIR, 15th May, 1905.

## No. XI.—SIZE AND BREEDING OF SNAKES.

### A PYTHON FROM BORNEO.

Mr. John Hagenbeck recently received a large python from the Malay Archipelago (probably from British North Borneo), which laid a batch of eggs after its arrival in Colombo and incubated them herself with success, some thirty or forty young hatching out in due course.

The following notes have been kindly supplied by Mr. Hagenbeck :—

COLOMBO, January 20th, 1905.

A gigantic python which arrived here last year from British Borneo via Singapore laid about one hundred eggs, on the 28th October, almost filling the box in which she was kept. On the following morning she had collected the

eggs, by skilful coiling of her body into a large heap which she completely covered in such a manner that the weight of the body exerted no pressure upon the soft-shelled eggs.

In order to maintain a constant temperature the snake slightly uncoiled herself from time to time so that the eggs became visible, thus regulating the temperature.

During the period of incubation I offered ducks, fowls, and geese to the python, but she refused all nourishment.

On the 14th January she left the mass of eggs quite exposed, and I had given up the hope of a successful issue when I discovered the first nestling with half its body emerging from the egg, into which, however, it retired again towards evening.

By the next day, 15th January, six young snakes, had hatched out, of which some died, while others were very active, making darts at a cloth held near them.

The period of incubation, lasted exactly two-and-a-half months. The young measures from two to two-and-a-half feet long, and have now been moved away from the parent into another box where they continue to increase in size without having fed meanwhile.

Altogether forty-five young have been recovered from the clutch. Of these, thirty-six still survive, which I shall attempt to rear, feeding them with frogs and small lizards.

So far as can be ascertained, the parent python measures about 28 feet in length and weighs 250lbs.

JOHN HAGENBECK.

(From "*Spolia Zeylanica*," March 1905.)

#### No. XII.—TIGER *versus* BEAR.

In Miscellaneous Notes No. IV. (Vol. XV, No. 4, page 707,) Tiger *versus* Bear, Capt. Lane asks if there are other instances of tigers attacking bears.

Some 5 or 6 years ago at the end of the monsoon when the grass was rank and long, I had been out stalking at Castle Rock.

My shikari was with me and on our way home we came down a hill path through heavy jungle and noticed various not quite fresh signs of a tiger having been on the path. When we got to the bottom the jungle ended in a grassy glade and within a few yards of the track, the grass had been trodden down in a circle some 20 feet in diameter, I should think. Tufts of hair and bits of skin and hair of the Indian Sloth Bear were strewn about in the circle, and it was evident a struggle had taken place in which the bear had suffered badly. It was also evident that a body had been dragged away, and following the track for a short distance we found under a bush the remains of the bear consisting of part of the skull and various other bits of bones, which, from their condition, must, I think, have been there some 2 or 3 days.